Impact of Demographic Change on Resettlement and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, FCT, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of demographic change on resettlement and conflict patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, FCT, Nigeria. The major objective of the study is to examine the impact of resettlement in Abuja Municipal Area Council, FCT, Nigeria. The study hypothesized that there is no strong association between resettlement and conflict patterns in FCT Abuja. This study adopted mixed method research design; the population of the study is 778,675 from which a sample size of 400 respondents was selected using simple random sampling technique, questionnaire was the major tool of data collection while descriptive statistics was used to analyzed the data collected. The study revealed that land disputes are a significant challenge, possibly related to resettlement and demographic changes affecting land ownership and allocation. Furthermore, the majority of respondents, 60% reported that conflicts occur occasionally, this suggests that while conflicts are not constant, they happen with enough regularity to be a notable part of residents' experiences. The study recommends that in the short term, government should provide adequate compensations and supports for displaced people to enable them compete favourably with new settlers in the resettled areas in Abuja. In the short run, government should invest in infrastructure development like housing, education, healthcare, skill acquisition programmes etc., to engaged the resettled population. In the long run, government should promote national cohesion through education and cultural exchange.

Keywords: Demographic, Change, Resettlement, Conflict, Conflict Patterns

Introduction

The global drive for infrastructural development in the cities has altered the very natural living pattern of people around the globe. For new infrastructure to be put in place many indigenous people are often displaced from their historical heritage. This environmental change takes place across America, Europe, Latin America,Australia and Africa generally. In advanced economies like those in Europe and America, infrastructural growths are often times followed by compensations and proper resettlement of the locals to preserve the cultural, religious and political sense of belonging of the people. The impact of resettlement on demographic change in seldom a major issue in such nations (Yesufu,2020).

Narrowly, resettlements World Bank (2023) observed that in Africa are often times devasting to the locals. This is because most African states revoked the right to ownership of land and its resources from the locals. This was done to ensure equitable access and use of African land for collective benefits, hence, returning all authorities to the Government. The situation is dare in the continent as most cities and mega towns still have people whose ancestral homes are forcefully demolished and temporarily resettled. The hasty resettlement of large population has induced hardship due to sudden demographic changes. The situation is not different in Nigeria. especially the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (World Bank, 2023).

The first major policy statement made by the Federal Government in 1976, when it decided to move the Federal Capital of Nigeria from Lagos (in the coastal area) to Abuja (in the central part of the country) was for a complete relocation of the entire inhabitants outside the new Federal Capital Territory, of about 8000 square kilometres. This was aimed at freeing the Territory from any primordial claims of indigeneity and ownership as

well as to enable Government take direct control, plan and develop the new city without any encumbrance (Tan, and Yao, 2022).

However, a careful enumeration later revealed that the figure to be relocated was not small. As at that time, the population figure was about 300,000 people and the cost was over two billion naira. Hence, there was a reconsideration that uprooting such a huge population would be unwise and could delayed the take-off of the resettlement project. The Federal Government then decided to allow the inhabitants to remain, but could be resettled within the territory, should their places of abode be affected by city development project. This major shift in policy direction after the initial resettlement of people to the neighbouring Nasarawa and Niger States respectively constituted the root cause of problems of squatters' settlement in the FCT.

Statement of Problem

Generally, resettlement always has its consequences on displaced persons whether it is voluntary or involuntary. The communities being forced to pave way for "development" inevitably suffer a decline in their standards of living. In addition, they lose their homelands and ancestral heritage. They also suffer losses of economic opportunities in the forms of failed businesses, productive farmlands and other forms of livelihood are also dismantled. The social fabric of these communities is destroyed such that informal networks and kinship ties that sustained them in times of need are no longer tenable. These factors definitely affect the livelihood of the people. In any case, resettlement is a fact of life and is desirable as a development requirement for the common good of citizens of nations that initiate them.

Research however, shows that many of such initiatives have not yielded positive outcomes. Such evidences include reoccurring conflicts between government and indigenous communities At the FCT these conflicts have led to multiple litigation at the court (Premium Times, 2013). This is not peculiar to FCT but to every community where resettlement is ongoing like Northern territory of Australia. The aboriginal people are going through untold struggles due to the land lease act of the Anglo-Australian government which favour the white cattle rearing communities against the aboriginal communities who are forced to live like squatters in their own land (Reyburn, 2010). Therefore, governments' attempt at resettlement are often faced with stiff resistance from affected communities. If the need for resettlement is for development purpose and the benefit of the larger society then it is inevitable for resettlement to take place. What matters in this case is how the resettlement strategies are structured {that is the presence of efficient and effective framework to plan and implement it} so that it will have a reduced adverse effect on the affected people and the environment. In line with this view, the government has initiated several policy strategies in the Federal Capital territory Abuja, Nigeria to cushion the adverse effects of the resettlement programmes, Different policy strategies have been tried out towards the resettlement of the inhabitant of FCT between 1976 to 2015 ranging from integration, total resettlement and partial resettlement (Jubril, 2006).

Meanwhile Abuja is experiencing rapid urbanization and influx of persons on a daily basis in large numbers. The massive population shift to Abuja has imposed a lot of pressure on infrastructure with attendant consequences of social disorganization which often result in conflicts both at interpersonal and communal conflicts. One notes also the attendant development of shanties and squalor settlements which have altered the masterplan of the FCT. The major response of the Federal Capital Territory Administration has been demolition of such illegal structures forcing affected residents to relocate to satellite towns. This scenario places diverse demands on affected communities in terms of host-migrant relationship. It is yet to be empirically ascertained the nature of demographic change and conflict patterns that ensue in this regard. This research therefore aims to examine the influence of resettlement on demographic change and conflict patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

Methodology

This study adopted mixed method research design; the population of the study is 778,675 from which a sample size of 400 respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique, questionnaire was the major tool of data collection while descriptive statistics was used to analysed the data collected.

Resettlement

The concept of resettlement has defied a universally accepted definition. Various authors have attempted to explain the concept. It is the movement of communities from one environment to the other, and changes or modifications of the physical and social environment in which resettles find themselves in and adapt to, they further explain the concept as a variety of migration types (Olawapo, 2021). This perhaps explains why some writers refer to the concept in other terms such as 'population resettlement,' 'population relocation,' 'forced migration,' 'population redistribution,' 'transplanted population,' 'displaced people,' 'evacuees,' and 'refugees', a process that seriously jeopardizes their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their lives (Mine, 2014).

Arun (2009) large development projects often lead to human displacement. Such development-induced displacements are often permanent and that the devastating impacts of many mega projects and the increasing evidence that economic redistribution and adequate compensation seldom occur usually fuel the human rights and displacement debate. Majority of the development-induced displacement often fare badly long after such projects are launched.

Demographics Change

Demography is the study of human populations with respect to their size, structure, and dynamics. For demographers, a population is a group of individuals that coexist at a point in time and share a defining characteristic such as residence in the same geographical area. The structure or composition of a population refers to the distribution of its members by age, sex, and other characteristics, such as place of residence and marital or health status (Dodge, 2006). Tarsi and Tuff (2012), populations have characteristics that are the basis of their dynamics and that are definable and measurable. They exhibit age-specific rates of development, mortality, and reproduction. They migrate into or out of an area at a definable rate. They have a measurable sex and age composition which may or may not be stable, and which is also determinant of the dynamics of change in the population. A word derived from the ancient Greek; "demography" literally means "describing the population".

Conflict

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or action of one or more members of group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more groups, and involve violence, interpersonal discord, and psychological tension, known as intergroup conflict. Conflict in groups often follows a specific course. Routine group interaction is first disrupted by an initial conflict, often caused by differences of opinion, disagreements between members, or scarcity of resources (Harvard, 2021). Conflict per se, is not bad. It is perhaps a necessity in the evolution and development of human organization. But when it degenerates to violent, destructive clashes, they become not only unhealthy but also counterproductive and progress threatening (Oluwasegun & Solagberu, 2019).

Empirical Data

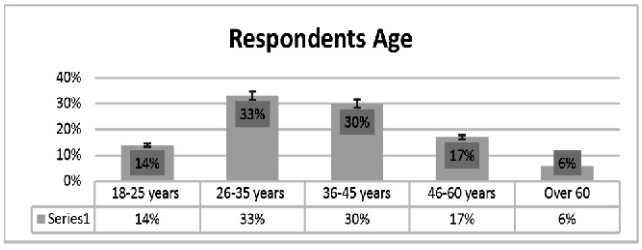


Figure 4.1. graphical representation of the respondent's age

Figure 1 shows that the largest age group among the respondents is 26-35 years, accounting for 33% of the total. This suggests that the population is relatively young, with a significant portion in their prime working and reproductive years.

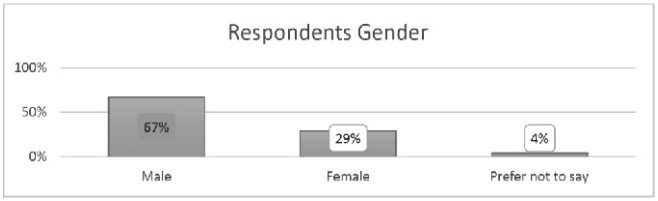


Figure 2 graphical representation of the Gender of the respondents

Figure 2 shows a significant male majority, with 67% of respondents being male. This indicates a possible male-dominated demographic within the population surveyed.

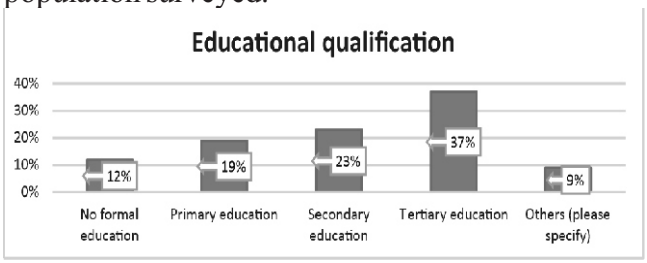


Figure 4, graphical representation of educational qualification

Figure 4 shows that the largest group of respondents (37%) has attained tertiary education, indicating a relatively high level of educational attainment in the population. This suggests that a significant portion of the population has access to higher education and the potential for skilled employment.

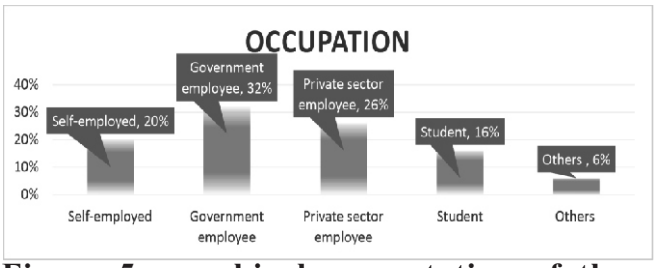


Figure 5, graphical presentation of the respondent's occupation

Figure 5 shows that the largest occupational group among the respondents is government employees, comprising 32% of the total. This indicates a significant reliance on public sector employment, which can influence economic stability and social services in the area.

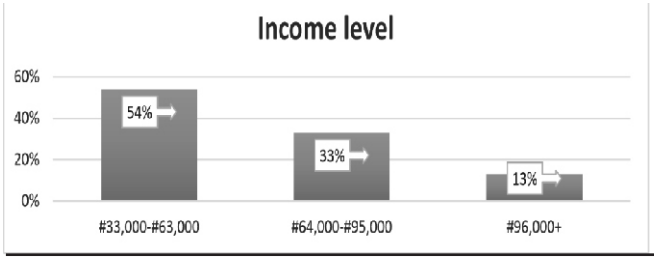


Figure 6, graphical representation of respondent's income

Figure 6 indicated that the majority of respondents (54%) fall within the income bracket of #33,000 to #63,000. This indicates that over half of the population earns within this lower to middle-income range, suggesting that economic conditions for many are modest.

Table 1: Respondents' views on changing population size

Pop. Size	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Increased	291	85%
Decreased	7	2%
Remained the same	43	13%
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024.

Table 1: provides data on respondents' perceptions of population changes in their area since their resettlement in the Abuja Municipal Area Council, based on the field survey conducted in 2024. A significant majority (85%) of respondents perceive that the population in their area has increased since their resettlement. This suggests a notable influx of new residents, indicating growth and potential urbanization or development in the area. A very small portion (2%) of respondents believe that the population has decreased. This indicates that only a few people have observed a reduction in the number of residents, which may be due to specific local factors or isolated incidents. 13% of respondents feel that the population has remained the same since their resettlement. This suggests stability in certain areas where the number of residents has not noticeably changed. The table reveals that the vast majority of respondents (85%) perceive an increase in the population in their area since their resettlement, indicating significant demographic growth. A small minority (2%) perceive a decrease, and 13% believe the population has remained the same. This data suggests that most areas within the Abuja Municipal Area Council are experiencing population growth, likely due to ongoing resettlement, urbanization, and possibly improved living conditions attracting more residents.

Table 2: Respondents view on population structure

Pop. Composition	Frequency	Percentage
Young population	141	41%
Elderly population	15	4%
Children	76	22%
Single individuals	104	31%
Others	5	2%
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 2: provides data on respondents' observations of changes in the population composition in their area within the Abuja Municipal Area Council, based on the field survey conducted in 2024. 41% of respondents observed an increase in the young population in their area. This indicates a notable influx of younger individuals, which could have implications for local services, education, and workforce dynamics. A small portion (4%) of respondents noticed an increase in the elderly population. This suggests that there is some growth in the number of older residents, which might require more healthcare and elderly support services. 22% of respondents reported an increase in families with children. This suggests that more families are settling in the area, indicating a need for family-oriented amenities such as schools, playgrounds, and pediatric healthcare. 31% of respondents observed an increase in single individuals. This could point to a growing trend of single-person households, which might influence housing market demands and social activities. A very small portion (2%) indicated other changes in population composition. These unspecified changes could include a variety of less common demographic shifts not captured by the main categories.

Table 3: Respondents view on ethnic composition

Ethnic Composition	Frequency	Percentage
Increase in ethnic diversity	245	72
Decrease in ethnic diversity	34	10
Increase in a specific ethnic group	15	4
Others (please specify)	47	13
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024.

Based on Table 3: from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria, here's an interpretation of the changes observed in the ethnic composition. 72% of the respondents observed an increase in ethnic diversity. This suggests that there has been a noticeable trend towards a more diverse ethnic makeup within the area. Only 10% of respondents reported a decrease in ethnic diversity. This might indicate localized instances where certain ethnic groups have become less represented or where a dominant group has gained prominence. 4% of respondents noted an increase in a specific ethnic group. This could imply a notable demographic shift towards the growth or influx of a particular ethnic community within the area. About 13% (47 out of 341) of respondents provided other observations not covered by the previous categories. These responses could include more nuanced changes or specific instances not captured in the broader categories above. Overall, the data suggests a predominant perception among respondents of increased ethnic diversity, with notable but smaller proportions reporting decreases or specific increases in ethnic groups within Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Table 4.14 Have you experienced any conflicts since your resettlement?

Conflicts	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	341	100%
No	0	0
Total	**341**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 4.14 from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria, provides the following interpretation regarding experiences of conflicts since resettlement. According to the table, 100% of respondents (341 out of 341) answered "Yes" to experiencing conflicts since their resettlement. This unanimous

response indicates that all surveyed individuals reported encountering some form of conflict following resettlement. The table shows 0% for respondents answering "No," implying that none of the surveyed individuals reported having no conflicts since resettlement. This suggests that conflict experiences are universal among the respondents, highlighting the prevalence of conflict as an issue in Abuja Municipal Area Council. Overall, Table 4.14 underscores the widespread occurrence of conflicts among residents following resettlement, emphasizing the need for understanding and addressing conflict dynamics as part of the broader study's focus on demographic changes and conflict patterns in the area.

Table Respondents view on types of disputes experienced

Disputes	Frequency	Percentage
Land disputes	195	57
Housing disputes	35	10
Employment disputes	13	4
Ethnic conflicts	85	25
Religious conflicts	1	0.3
Socioeconomic conflicts	12	4
Others (please specify)	0	0
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Based on Table 4.15 from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria, here's an interpretation of the types of conflicts experienced by respondents: The most frequently reported type of conflict, with 57% of respondents mentioning it. This indicates that land disputes are a significant issue, possibly related to resettlement and demographic changes affecting land ownership or allocation. Reported by 10% (35 out of 341) of respondents, housing disputes are another notable conflict type. This could involve issues such as property rights, rental disputes, or housing allocation problems. 4% (13 out of 341) of respondents, employment disputes highlight conflicts related to job opportunities, labor rights, or workplace issues. 25% (85 out of 341) of respondents reported experiencing ethnic conflicts. This suggests tensions or disputes arising from ethnic differences or competition in the resettlement area. A small percentage, 0.3% (1 out of 341) of respondents mentioned religious conflicts. This indicates conflicts stemming from religious differences or tensions. Socioeconomic Conflict Mentioned by 4% (12 out of 341) of respondents, socioeconomic conflicts could involve disputes over economic resources, inequalities, or access to services. None of the respondents provided specific other types of conflicts, as indicated by 0% for this category. Table 4.15 illustrates a range of conflict types experienced by residents following resettlement in Abuja Municipal Area Council. Land disputes appear to be the most prevalent, followed by ethnic conflicts, housing disputes, and others, highlighting diverse challenges related to demographic changes and resettlement in the area.

Table 6: Respondent's perception whether resettlement affects peace or conflict in FCT

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Contributed to long-term peace	79	23
Contributed to long-term conflict	217	64
No significant impact	45	13
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024.

Based on Table 4.18 from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria, here's an interpretation of respondents' views on whether the resettlement process has contributed to long-term peace or conflict. The majority of respondents, 64% (217 out of 341), believe that the resettlement process has contributed to long-term peace in their area. This indicates a positive perception among most residents that resettlement has helped to stabilize and improve the community. 23% (79 out of 341) of respondents feel that the resettlement process has contributed to long-term conflict. This reflects a significant portion of the population experiencing ongoing tensions and disputes, likely exacerbated by the resettlement. 13% (45 out of 341) of respondents perceive that the resettlement process has had no significant impact on long-term peace or conflict. This suggests that for some residents, resettlement has neither improved nor worsened the situation in a

meaningful way. Overall, Table 4.18 indicates that while the majority view the resettlement process as a contributor to long-term peace, a considerable minority experiences it as a source of conflict. Additionally, some residents see the resettlement as having no significant effect. These mixed perceptions highlight the varied impacts of resettlement on different segments of the population in Abuja Municipal Area Council.

Table 7: Respondents view of occurrence of conflicts due to resettlement in Abuja

Options	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Yes	325	95.30
No	16	4.69
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Based on Table 7: from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria. Majority of the respondents, 95.30%, reported experiencing or observing conflicts since resettlement. This indicates that conflict is a universal experience among the surveyed population in Abuja Municipal Area Council following resettlement. There are no respondents who reported not experiencing or observing conflicts, as indicated by the absence of any responses in this category. Overall, Table 4.23 highlights that conflicts have been a pervasive issue for all residents in Abuja Municipal Area Council since resettlement. This unanimous response underscores the significant impact that resettlement has had on creating or exacerbating conflicts within the community. Addressing these conflicts is crucial for improving the stability and well-being of the residents.

Table 8: Respondent view of frequency conflicts occur

Options	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Very frequently	15	4
Frequently	31	9
Occasionally	183	54
Rarely	112	33
Never	-	-
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Based on table 8 from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria, here's an interpretation of the frequency of conflicts reported by respondents. The most frequently reported frequency, with 54% (183 out of 341) of respondents indicating that conflicts occur occasionally. This suggests that conflicts are a recurring issue but not constant or pervasive. 33% (112 out of 341) of respondents reported that conflicts occur rarely. This indicates that a significant portion of conflicts are infrequent, occurring sporadically rather than regularly. 9% (31 out of 341) of respondents indicated that conflicts occur frequently. This suggests that for a smaller subset of the population, conflicts are a more common occurrence, happening with some regularity. 4% (15 out of 341) of respondents reported that conflicts occur very frequently. This indicates that conflicts are a persistent and frequent issue for a small minority of the population. Overall, Table 4.25 provides insights into the varying frequency of conflicts experienced in Abuja Municipal Area Council since resettlement. While conflicts are reported across different frequencies, the majority occur occasionally, highlighting the fluctuating nature of conflict dynamics in the community.

Table 9: Respondents perception on impact of conflicts on peacebuilding

Options	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Displacement of people	35	10
Loss of lives	94	28
Destruction of property	95	28
Disruption of economic activities	56	16
Social tension	47	14
Other	14	4
Total	**341**	**100**

Source: Field Survey 2024

Based on Table 9: from the study on Resettlement, Demographic Change, and Conflict Patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja-Nigeria, here's an interpretation of how conflicts have impacted the community. The most significant impact reported, with 28% (94 out of 341) of respondents indicating that conflicts have resulted in loss of lives. This suggests that conflicts in Abuja Municipal Area Council have

had a profound human cost, affecting the community's well-being and safety. Also, at 28% (95 out of 341), respondents reported that conflicts have led to the destruction of property. This includes damage to homes, infrastructure, and other physical assets, impacting residents' livelihoods and quality of life. 16% (56 out of 341) of respondents noted that conflicts have disrupted economic activities. This indicates that economic stability and growth have been adversely affected by ongoing conflicts, impacting businesses and livelihoods. 14% (47 out of 341) of respondents mentioned social tension as an impact of conflicts. This suggests that conflicts have strained community relations and social cohesion, affecting trust and cooperation among residents. 10% (35 out of 341) of respondents reported that conflicts have led to the displacement of people. This includes forced migration or relocation due to insecurity or loss of homes, highlighting the humanitarian consequences of conflicts. 4% (14 out of 341) of respondents cited other specific impacts of conflicts not covered by the listed options. These could include psychological effects, health impacts, or additional socio-economic repercussions. Overall, Table 4.27 underscores the significant and multifaceted impacts of conflicts on the community in Abuja Municipal Area Council. These impacts range from loss of lives and destruction of property to disruptions in economic activities, social tensions, and displacement of people. Addressing these impacts is crucial for fostering stability, resilience, and sustainable development in the area.

Test of Hypothesis

Resettlement * Conflict Patterns Crosstabulation

Count

		Conflict Patterns				
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	Total
Resettlement	1.00	18	4	0	12	34
	2.00	0	0	20	43	63
	3.00	0	0	19	1	20
	4.00	12	120	61	30	223
	5.00	0	0	0	1	1
Total		30	124	100	87	341

Pearson Chi-Square = 245.201a df = 12, Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) = 0.000
Source: SPSS 25 output 2024

Chi-square Value: The Pearson Chi-square value is 245.201, which is substantial, suggesting a strong association between resettlement and conflict patterns. The degree of freedom for this test is 12, reflecting the number of categories minus one for both variables (resettlement and conflict patterns). The p-value is 0.000, which is below the conventional significance level of 0.05. Given that the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho2). This indicates that resettlement does have a significant influence on conflict patterns in Abuja Municipal Area Council. The analysis shows a significant relationship between resettlement and conflict patterns, suggesting that changes in resettlement patterns are likely associated with variations in conflict patterns in the area studied.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that majority (85%) of respondents perceive that the population in their area has increased since their resettlement. This suggests a notable influx of new residents, indicating growth and potential urbanization or development in the area. Again, 41% of respondents observed an increase in the young population in their area. This indicates a notable influx of younger individuals, which could have implications for local services, education, and workforce dynamics.

It also revealed that land disputes are a significant challenge, possibly related to resettlement and demographic changes affecting land ownership and allocation. Furthermore, the majority of respondents, 60% reported that conflicts occur occasionally, this suggests that while conflicts are not constant, they happen with enough regularity to be a notable part of residents' experiences.

The study revealed that conflict is a universal experience among the surveyed population in Abuja Municipal Area Council following resettlement and demographic changes. This suggests that issues related to land ownership, use, and allocation are the predominant source of conflict in the area. This was further affirmed by the hypothesis tested in the study.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Demographic changes have significantly contributed to resettlement conflicts in FCT, Abuja particularly that demographic change has influenced population composition in FCT Abuja. This is particularly worrisome as it has continued to have negative impact on the indigenous people of Abuja, this has influenced the peaceful coexistence that has endured across the landscape of Abuja across the ethnic composition of residents in the area. Consequently, the influx of people and the resettlement has changed the ethnic composition of Abuja and has caused conflicts between groups. Ethnic diversity and possibly demographic shifts are prominent features of the study area's social landscape. Given that majority of the participants in the study observed an increase in ethnic diversity, which suggests a noticeable trend towards a more diverse ethnic makeup within the area. In nutshell, the study resolved those demographic changes and resettlement of population in Abuja has influenced conflicts in the study area.

The following recommendations are made to reverse the impact of demographic changes on population resettlement in Abuja.

i. In the short term, government should provide adequate compensations and supports for displaced people to enable them compete favourably with new settlers in the resettled areas in Abuja. In the short run, government should invest in infrastructure development like housing, education, healthcare, skill acquisition programmes etc., to engaged the resettled population. In the long run, government should promote national cohesion through education and cultural exchange.

ii. In the short run, government should initiate an impact assessment and need analysis to help reduce conflicts among the resettled population and the host communities, in the middle term, encourage community-led development initiatives to harmonize the divergent groups in the resettled areas in Abuja. While in the long term, government should establish permanent national framework for conflicts resolution across the country.

iii. Finally, government should adopt inclusive urban planning and development to accommodates diversity, equity and inclusion, while accessing international funding and resources from United nations, World Bank, European Union etc., to assists resettled population to cope with the sudden changes.

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